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BRITAIN/NIGERIA /KIDNAPPING BROKAW: Like all good mysteries, there is more to the Dikko affair than meets the eye. The elements, as you may recall, were two crates at the London airport and two men in each. In one was Umaru Dikko, a former Cabinet minister in Nigeria, living in exile in Great Britain. He had been kidnapped, drugged and packed for shipment to Nigeria. Well, the story now gets better. Henry Champ has been investigating.

CHAMP: To most Nigerians, Umaru Dikko is the Cabinet minister suspected of stealing a billion dollars, taking kickbacks, accepting payoffs. He fled Nigeria when the government was overthrown last December. Some of his business associates are still in this Lagos jail, charged with corruption. They are Europeans, and it is believed they convinced the Nigerian secret police they could arrange for Israeli mercenaries to bring Dikko back.

DR. RICHARD JEFFRIES (Nigerian affairs expert): There is evidence quite a large number of businessmen in Europe were approached and refused to have anything to do with the matter.

CHAMP: But somebody did, and the result was a botched kidnapping, with the discovery of Dikko and three Israelis in two crates, waiting to be put on a Nigerian cargo jet. Today, three Israelis and one Nigerian appeared under heavy security in a London court, charged with kidnapping and ordered held for trial. Two of the Israelis, Felix *Abotba, a bar owner, and Alexander *Barrack, who once had casino interests in Nigeria, are thought to be mercenaries. But one of those in custody, Dr. *Lev Ari Shapiro, does not fit that profile. Found in the crate with Dikko, he is one of Israel's leading anesthesiologists, in charge of the intensive care unit at this Israeli hospital, where his wife is a pediatrician. She was in court today, pregnant with their third child. They live in this apartment, are thought to be well off. His neighbors do not believe he acted for money. And NBC News has learned he has boasted of contacts with the Israeli secret police. And was it only a coincidence on the day before the kidnapping, Dr. Shapiro stayed at this London hotel and so did David *Kimhe, number two in the Israeli foreign ministry, an expert on African affairs and a former Israeli intelligence agent himself? In Parliament, the British foreign secretary has ignored all this. BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY: There is no evidence of Israeli government involvement in this matter.

CHAMP: The British government would like this whole affair swept away and forgotten. But the men appearing in court today face life sentences, and the betting is, the masterminds, be they businessmen or governments, will eventually be revealed. Henry Champ, NBC News, London.